

"With the third anniversary of this war a few short days away, it's atrocious that the Administration still insists on funding this \$250 billion effort through emergency spending bills. It's a cheap trick that keeps war spending off the regular budget books and circumvents the scrutiny of the regular appropriations process. The \$67.9 billion included in today's supplemental spending bill isn't even enough to maintain our current level of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through the end of 2006. Our soldiers deserve better than an Administration that refuses to discuss an exit strategy or even plan out spending more than a few months in advance.

"For three years our men and women in uniform have fought in Iraq, and for what? There were no weapons of mass destruction. According to the 9/11 Commission there was no connection between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. And now that a growing majority of Americans are doubting the war, the president's response is yet another PR campaign, complete with unsupported platitudes about 'real progress' and a 'strong performance.'

"The nascent Iraqi parliament is a positive step for the country, but continual bombings and kidnappings mean daily life in Iraq remains fraught with danger and uncertainty. It's not clear that American reconstruction efforts are having a positive impact, especially when the majority of our efforts in Iraq are still focused solely on fighting the insurgency and keeping our troops alive. Security costs alone have eaten up a quarter or more of the funds intended for rebuilding projects.

"On this third anniversary of the war, our soldiers, our national guard, their families and all Americans deserve better leadership from the president. I never felt that the Administration had an adequate plan for post-conflict reconstruction. I have repeatedly called for greater Congressional oversight and an exit strategy, while recognizing that our troops have done an excellent job, despite having insufficient body armor or equipment. I would like to hear a serious assessment about we can realistically hope to accomplish in Iraq, but short of that, I hope to hear the president talk seriously about U.S. troop redeployment in the next year, while bringing in our international partners to work toward future stability of the region."